### Area of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Understanding youth health and human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the dimensions of, and the interrelationships within and between, youth health and human development, and analyse the health status of Australia’s youth using appropriate measurements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Youth issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe and explain the factors that have an impact on the health and individual human development of Australia’s youth, outline health issues relevant to Australia’s youth and, in relation to a specific health issue, analyse strategies or programs that have an impact on youth health and development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCING YOUTH
KEY KNOWLEDGE

- Definitions of physical, social, emotional and intellectual development
- Characteristics of, and interrelationships between, physical, social, emotional and intellectual development during the lifespan stage of youth

KEY SKILLS

- Define health and individual human development
- Describe characteristics of, and interrelationships between, the different types of individual human development during the lifespan stage of youth
INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the interrelated concepts of physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in order to attain an understanding of the individual’s experiences as they journey through life. Of particular focus is the lifespan stage of youth. Youth is the period of time in a person’s life that sees them transform from childhood to adulthood. It is a time when the individual will experience a unique form of physical growth known as puberty.

More recently, the term youth has become a more contemporary reflection of not just physical changes but also the social, emotional and intellectual changes that a person will experience at this stage of their life. These changes are due to the influence of their families, their culture, their peers and the media. They are also influenced by their own initial sense of self-esteem as they enter this rapidly changing phase of development. These changes do not occur within a strict timeline. Changes occur at different rates according to the unique genetic make-up of the person and the environment in which they live.

1.1 Defining development

**growth** Refers to the measurable changes in the body, mainly due to an increase in the number and size of the body’s cells.

**individual human development** Describes the gradual changes in an individual’s physical, social, emotional and intellectual states and abilities.

**quantitative** To measure, count, or gain an idea of how much change is occurring by looking at quantities or amounts.

As a person lives out their lifespan they will experience many changes. These changes may relate to how their body looks and functions – such as growing taller – or how they interact with other people – such as being able to listen and speak. These changes are referred to as **growth** and **individual human development**.

Growth is **quantitative** in nature and refers to the increase in cell number, size and complexity within the body. Increases in height, weight and body mass are examples of growth that can be easily measured. Individual human development is a term used to describe the gradual changes in our physical, social, emotional and intellectual states and capabilities as we move through life. The changes associated with development are mainly **qualitative** and they cannot be easily measured or quantified.

Individual human development requires change. It involves a gradual and progressive change in ability or capability. In addition, development is change that is understood to have a permanent or lasting effect or at least an ongoing impact on the way the individual functions. For many people, however, in later life the impact may be a regressive change, such as decreases in eyesight and hearing ability.
1.2 Characteristics of development

Physical development

*Physical development* refers to those changes that occur in an individual’s body over time, including growth. Physical development occurs in a variety of categories including body size, body proportions or shape, overall body structure and function such as tissue make-up (muscle-to-fat ratio), skeletal growth and hormone production. Physical development also involves changes in physical abilities categorised as *motor development*.

At birth, an infant has reflexes that control their movements. They are involuntary and include actions such as grasping (if the palm of the hand is touched) and sucking (when something touches their lips). As the infant develops, the reflexes become voluntary actions referred to as *motor skills*.

A motor skill is a physical action that requires the utilisation of skeletal muscles. Muscles also depend upon the proper functioning of the brain, skeleton, joints and nervous system. Motor development, therefore, depends on muscles, bones and the nervous system maturing and it follows the same pattern in almost every person. Each skill appears in order, with simple skills setting the stage for more complex skills, such as when an infant moves from lying to lifting his or her head, to sitting, to crawling, to standing, and finally to walking.

Motor skills are divided into two types, gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

Gross motor skills

The term *gross motor skills* refers to the ability of individuals to carry out activities that require large muscles or groups of muscles. Muscles or groups of muscles should act in a coordinated fashion to accomplish a movement or a series of movements. Examples of tasks that utilise gross motor skills include balancing, walking, running, throwing something and jumping.
Fine motor skills involve small muscle movements of the hands, feet and muscles of the head (such as the tongue, lips, facial muscles) in coordination with the eyes, and the use of very precise motor movement in order to achieve an especially delicate task. Fine motor skills include the ability to manipulate small objects, transfer objects from hand to hand, and various hand–eye coordination tasks. Some examples of activities that employ fine motor skills are:

- writing
- sewing
- drawing
- imitating subtle facial gestures
- pronouncing words (coordination of soft palate, tongue, lips)
- manipulating a computer mouse.

Approximate age ranges for each motor skill have been determined. The skill that appears the most often within a particular age range is called the norm for that age. Gross and fine motor skills are particularly evident during the lifespan stage of childhood. During youth the skills are refined and this process will continue on into adulthood, but will begin to decline in middle and later adulthood. Some of the major motor skills that children and youth will develop are identified in Table 1.1.

**FIGURE 1.2** Gross motor skills

**THINK, PAIR, SHARE**

What are some of the motor skills being demonstrated in this photograph? What large muscles are being used for these activities? What other body structures are also allowing these young people to play this sport?

**FIGURE 1.3** Fine motor skills

**THINK, PAIR, SHARE**

What are some of the motor skills being demonstrated in this photograph? What small muscles are being used in this activity?
### Table 1.1 Gross and fine motor skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gross motor skills</th>
<th>Fine motor skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>* Sits without support</td>
<td>* Reaches, grasps, puts objects in mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Crawls</td>
<td>* Drops and picks up toy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Walks with help</td>
<td>* Builds tower of small blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Walks alone</td>
<td>* Scribbles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hops, skips and jumps</td>
<td>* Paints with whole arm movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Runs, but child is still developing control of speed and direction</td>
<td>* Holds crayon with thumb and fingers (rather than fist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Able to throw and catch</td>
<td>* Swipes tablet/phone screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Balances on a beam or board</td>
<td>* Presses buttons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hits a ball with a racket or bat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>• Increases ability to dodge and climb (e.g. better control of footing for rock climbing)</td>
<td>• Writes with a pen using finger movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increases ability to catch and throw accurately</td>
<td>• Uses computer mouse to control a cursor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Constructs objects with large tools</td>
<td>• Manipulates fingers for musical instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Activity 1.1

**Gross and fine motor skills**

1. Provide an example of a reflex.
2. Why do you think infants are born with reflexes?
3. How can the development of motor skills impact on the way a person interacts with others?
4. Identify which type of motor skill each of the following belongs to. Also indicate an approximate age at which you think a person would be able to perform these tasks:
   - a. bouncing a ball
   - b. painting with some wrist action
   - c. using a small screwdriver
   - d. striking a ball with a bat
   - e. playing difficult pieces of music on a piano
   - f. dribbling a basketball
   - g. climbing a rope
   - h. balancing on a surfboard
   - i. using video game buttons (e.g. PlayStation, Nintendo DS)
   - j. drawing accurate lines with a ruler.

### Social development

Social development is the increasing complexity of behaviour patterns used in relationships with other people. It is concerned with the ways in which an individual’s ability to interact with those around him or her changes as they move through the lifespan. Social development involves learning how to communicate with different groups of people.
An individual experiences positive social development when he or she learns how to behave in an acceptable way with other people. As a person develops socially they learn to display appropriate behaviours allowing them to interact more fully with others. These interactions occur mainly through the use of language – in both spoken and written forms – or via physical actions.

An important component of the social development of an individual is the socialisation process. **Socialisation** is the process by which a person learns to live with others and learns appropriate patterns of behaviour and thought. As an individual develops, there is a deliberate and conscious effort made through active training to help the individual learn the values and expectations of the society in which he or she lives. A person needs to learn to adjust their behaviour according to the rules for appropriate behaviour in that society in order to be a successful part of the community. The learning of appropriate behaviour is a lifelong process.

Apart from the family, there are many influences on a person from the outside environment. Some other important agents of socialisation include the media, **peer group**, school and religion. Parents have the most direct effect on the development of the child, acting as role models. In addition, parents, to a certain degree, control the environment of a child in different ways. They allow the child to experience specific settings outside of the home environment such as a school, museum or gallery, church, temple or mosque. Extended family, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, also contribute to the socialisation process.

**Learning the expectations of gender** (or **gender roles**), is an important developmental task associated with social development. A person will also learn what are considered appropriate gender roles through their cultural experiences. Parents have a key role in guiding their children through their development in this area. Learning these roles will also occur through the process of imitating observed behaviour. In the case of gender, this may involve imitating the tasks and attitudes of the same-gender parent. The onset of the physical changes of puberty may also result in a change in the way the children are perceived and treated by their parents, family and community, depending on their culture. These changes can mean many differences in the opportunities males and females face, based on their gender. The imposition of gender norms can impact on education and personal development, as well as on life choices.
Emotional development

Emotional development refers to feelings and the ways in which an individual learns to express, understand and exercise control over them. Emotions are the reaction of a person to a situation that invokes feelings. Emotions can be expressed through facial expressions and physical movements. Examples of emotions include sadness, happiness, fear, anger or disgust.

Developing a sense of self-esteem and the closely related self-concept also forms an integral part of emotional development. This is the process by which a person develops a sense of self and is aware of the importance of gaining social acceptance and experiencing achievement.

Self-esteem and self-concept

Self-esteem generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves (our self-worth). Self-concept refers to the general idea we have of ourselves. Self-esteem and self-concept are very closely linked and, in fact, self-esteem can refer to particular parts of self-concept. A person develops and maintains their self-concept through the process of taking

Activity 1.2

Socialisation

1 Referring to the photographs above, identify the socialising agents that impact on the social development of individuals throughout their lifespan. What other socialising agents can you think of?
2 Give examples of what is learnt through the socialisation process.
3 Give some examples of behaviour that you have learnt that is socially acceptable and allows you to interact with others in a positive manner.
4 What are the different forms of communication that you frequently use to relay information?
5 Explain how the forms of communication identified in question 4 increase your social development.
action and then reflecting on what they have achieved, as well as what others tell them about their achievements. A person’s self-concept is developed or constructed by them as they interact with the environment and reflect on that interaction. It is, therefore, changeable throughout the lifespan.

Self-esteem and self-concept consist of the judgements an individual makes about their characteristics and qualities, including their attitude about themselves and their sense of worthiness. It can therefore affect the control and expression of emotions. During early development, children tend to have a vague, general concept of who they are; hence, their development of self-esteem and a self-concept is at a fairly unsophisticated stage. As the child develops, their idea of ‘who they are’ gradually grows into concepts about themselves in various contexts or situations – as students at school, in relation to peers, in relation to family, and also as an emotional, physical and intellectual being.

The development of self-esteem is a component of emotional development. As the individual increases their sense of self, and self-worth, they enhance other abilities and develop greater control over their emotional responses to different situations.

Stages of emotional development
As an individual moves through the lifespan, they will experience the following changes in their emotional development:

**Infancy:** The child develops trust and security and a basic optimism. Some negative experiences may cause the child to become insecure and mistrustful. Emotional responses change from basic reactions to more complex, self-conscious responses when the child learns and expresses new emotions such as joy and happiness, or anger and frustration. Independent behaviours increase with parental encouragement around feeding, dressing and toilet training – this starts the process of developing self-esteem. The infant also becomes attached to a small group of people (i.e. family members).

**Childhood:** During early childhood, the nurtured child emerges from this stage sure of themselves, excited about their newfound control and self-sufficiency. This creates feelings of pride; however, it is not entirely linked with self-assurance, initiative and independence. Some children express tantrums, stubbornness and negativity. During later childhood the individual learns to broaden his or her skills through active play of all sorts, to cooperate with others and to lead and follow others. Motivation for further development occurs through achievements, recognising abilities and

![Figure 1.6 Experimenting with make-up is one of the ways in which female youth create a sense of self](image)
interaction with others, which all build self-esteem. The child also develops some coping strategies for problem solving and stress tolerance.

**Youth**: The young person learns to master the more formal skills of life; relating with peers and participating in play that may be structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork. The need for self-discipline increases yearly. The young person also learns how to answer the question of ‘Who am I?’ But even well-adjusted adolescents experience some role identity issues. Many adolescents experiment with minor delinquency and self-doubt. At this time of life the individual’s friendships have greater emphasis on new emotions of intimacy and loyalty. There is also an increase in conformity due to peer pressure.

**Early adulthood**: The successful young adult can experience true intimacy — the kind of intimacy that makes a good marriage possible or a genuine and enduring friendship. Self-esteem increases as an individual’s self-concept becomes actualised through the development of a personal identity.

**Adulthood**: The mature adult develops the peak of adjustment — integrity. When an individual reaches the adult level of emotional development they have established a personal identity through the development of their self-concept. The adult has also developed greater control and coping mechanisms for the emotional stresses related to adulthood responsibilities and commitments such as career and intimate relationships.

### Intellectual development

**Intellectual development** is also commonly referred to as cognitive development. This type of development involves change in the ways a person is able to think and reason as they grow older. Intellectual development includes the formation of intelligence and basic cognitive skills that occurs from infancy onwards.

An infant initially relies on using their senses to learn things about themselves and the environment they live in. Gradually, as the individual progresses through infancy, childhood and youth, he or she develops skills in the following:

- recognition and memory of objects, words and events, etc.
- the establishment and expansion of vocabulary, and the use of their vocabulary in speech and communication
- understanding of concepts, concrete and then abstract
- the ability to think logically and to reason (see another person’s point of view).

During adulthood the individual will undergo maintenance, improvement or decline of these intellectual skills and abilities as they age.

### 1.3 Interrelationships between physical, social, emotional and intellectual development

An interrelationship exists between physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. These types of development can be co-dependent, meaning that development in one area often depends on the development that occurs in another.

For example, social development that involves communicating with words cannot occur until the
physical development that allows the controlled movement of the tongue and mouth muscles occurs. It also requires a level of intellectual development that involves the recognition and memory of words. Emotional development allows for the words to be communicated in a way that can convey further meaning to the message through the use of facial expressions.

The close link between the types of development can at times make it difficult to determine to which area of development certain skills and abilities belong. When looking at the communication example above, social and emotional development can be difficult to distinguish from each other. For example, ‘relating’ to another person in an appropriate manner involves the utilisation of a person’s social abilities, but will also involve the expression of emotion.

It is important to remember that while the pattern of development, and to an extent how the different types of development interrelate, is predictable there are individual differences, particularly in relation to timing of development.

One of the most time-sensitive and prominent interrelationships between the different types of development is that which occurs during youth where the physical changes in the development of sexual maturity can affect the other types of development the individual is experiencing in positive or negative ways; in particular with the development of an individual’s self-concept (emotional development) as well as the formation of friendships and the establishment of a peer group that they feel that they belong to (social development).

There is some evidence that early puberty can cause a negative interrelationship with the development of self-concept because the individual may not have the intellectual maturity to cope with the changes they are experiencing but that their peers are not. In terms of social development, current peers may not be as accepting of the changes and therefore a new social group may have to be found that is of an older age group. This may also lead to changes in behaviour, for example an increase in risk-taking behaviour such as alcohol use or sexual activity, which further isolates the individual from their previous friendship group.

Experiencing the physical changes of puberty later than that of peers can also demonstrate a negative interrelationship between the types of development. Males in particular who experience delayed puberty can suffer from feelings of low self-worth because these individuals not only lack secondary sexual characteristics, but are usually shorter and smaller than their friends, impacting on their self-esteem and emotional development. It can also affect social development as a previously active person may stop participating in sports because he or she is uncomfortable in front of team mates when unable to match strength and size, thereby causing the potential loss of a social group. The desire to look like everyone else during this time of life is strong and when the timing of physical changes seems to be outside the norm it can cause a lot of emotional and social developmental changes that the individual may not be quite ready for.

Figure 1.7 The physical changes associated with puberty can have an impact on social development

The following tables outline a small number of the many different ways development is interrelated.
### Table 1.2 Physical development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of physical development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with social development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with intellectual development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with emotional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to walk (gross motor skills)</td>
<td>Increase in interaction with other children and environment</td>
<td>Able to learn and recognise items due to increased opportunity to come into contact with them (e.g. outdoor play equipment)</td>
<td>Able to initiate physical contact and express affection when able to walk to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical maturity resulting in body being the size and shape of an adult</td>
<td>Increase in acceptance and interaction with peers, possibly due to looking older</td>
<td>Increase in skills in acting in a safe manner (e.g. driving safely)</td>
<td>Able to respond to acceptance by peers and increase in self-esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.3 Social development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of social development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with physical development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with intellectual development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with emotional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning appropriate behaviour when playing a team sport</td>
<td>Increase in skill in muscle use and control</td>
<td>Increased understanding of rules associated with playing a particular sport</td>
<td>Increase in self-esteem when having performed to best level of ability or experiencing a successful result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning cultural expectations with regard to gender roles</td>
<td>May participate in certain physical activities based on gender. This may lead to better coordination in males and better fine motor skills in females</td>
<td>Development of ability to reason through the decisions made by others, such as parents with regard to curfew, disciplinary actions, etc.</td>
<td>Increase in ability to develop personal identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.4 Intellectual development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of intellectual development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with social development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with physical development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with emotional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in ability to read and write</td>
<td>Increase in use of different communication techniques to interact with others</td>
<td>Increase in eye–hand coordination and control of fine motor skills and small muscles of the hand</td>
<td>Sharing the reading process with others increases ability to form attachments can also increase control of emotions through the reading of fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in ability to reason (to consider another person’s point of view)</td>
<td>Increase in ability to see another person’s point of view will foster positive interaction and decision-making and increase communication and expression of thoughts</td>
<td>Control of physical actions (i.e. hand movements, when communicating an opinion or debating)</td>
<td>Enables the development of self-concept and personal identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.5 Emotional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of emotional development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with social development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with intellectual development</th>
<th>Interrelationship with physical development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to cope with retirement and impact not working has on personal identity</td>
<td>Decrease in socialising with workmates, but increase in social activity with spouse</td>
<td>May experience loss of memory and knowledge due to decreased use of these abilities</td>
<td>May increase gross or fine motor skills as more time available for leisure activities such as sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to detach from complete dependence on a parent</td>
<td>Increase in socialising process from peers and other adults will lead to new knowledge on expectations of different groups in the community</td>
<td>Increase in vocabulary size due to increased interaction with others</td>
<td>Increase in use of motor skills due to the increase in play activities with peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 The lifespan

The human lifespan consists of a series of orderly, predictable stages that begin at the time of an individual’s conception and end with their death. The different stages are often associated with an approximate age and certain developmental milestones. There are variations, however, in the abilities and experiences of individuals that lead to diversity in their development. These variations mean that not everyone agrees on the precise length or age range of each lifespan stage.

There is also some debate over the number of stages an individual will experience during their lifetime. The human lifespan is experienced differently by different groups within the community. These differences are often culturally based. For example, some cultures will consider a person to be an adult before they reach the age of 18, which is the legal age of adulthood in Australia. The movement into adulthood at a certain age may be based on a variety of factors. In some religions, a milestone is achieved once a certain level of religious knowledge is attained. In other cultures, it may be marked by the social responsibility measured by helping to provide income for the family or care for younger children.

Throughout the lifespan an individual will experience different forms of growth and development. These are often referred to as developmental tasks and each stage is characterised by events and expectations relating to development. The changes that are experienced by an individual as they move through the lifespan will be greatly affected by both inherited influences (what they inherit in their genes) and environmental influences (the influence of external factors from the environment in which they live such as their culture, access to healthcare and level of income).
## Stages of the lifespan and approximate ages

### Table 1.6 Stages of the lifespan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of lifespan</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Major events or developmental milestones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prenatal</strong></td>
<td>Conception–birth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- begins at fertilisation  
- most rapid rate of growth for the lifespan – one cell becomes 200 billion cells  
- 40-week-long period of time  
- body structures and organs develop  
- foetus is vulnerable to environmental factors such as toxins and viruses |
| **Infancy**       | Birth–18 months |  
- begins at birth  
- growth is rapid  
- initially the infant needs to adapt its body functions to the external environment, for example, developing temperature control, using a grasping reflex  
- infant learns to eat, crawl, walk, form noises then words  
- social interaction begins through the use of words and imitation of gestures |
| **Toddlerhood**   | 18 months–3 years |  
- growth slows down and is at a steady rate  
- social interaction increases through more sophisticated use of language and expression  
- behaviour learnt is increasingly appropriate for the different situations they experience  
- vocabulary increases  
- child learns basic physical, social, emotional and intellectual skills that continue to refine throughout this stage of the lifespan |
| **Childhood**     | 3–12 years |  
- stage from late childhood to full maturity  
- physical and sexual maturity are achieved  
- social interaction focus shifts from family to peers  
- search for personal identity becomes important  
- the ability to think abstractly and consider the thoughts and opinions of others develops  
- transition from dependence on others to independence and interdependence  
- focus on education and career development  
- will explore sexuality and intimate relationships |
| **Youth**         | 12–18 years |  
- peak of physical development is reached, after which a decline in physical abilities may begin  
- formation of permanent intimate relationships may occur  
- possible establishment of a new family  
- expected to support themselves financially  
- build a career  
- role models for younger generations |
| **Early adulthood** | 18–39 years |  
- decline in muscle strength and sensory organs can occur  
- possible changes in career  
- family changes may include children moving out of home |
| **Middle adulthood** | 40–64 years |  
- adjusting to retirement  
- coping with possible decline in quality of health  
- loss of spouse and changes to family (e.g. arrival of grandchildren)  
- loss of memory |
| **Later adulthood** | 65+ years |  
- adjusting to retirement  
- coping with possible decline in quality of health  
- loss of spouse and changes to family (e.g. arrival of grandchildren)  
- loss of memory |
1.5 The youth lifespan stage

Youth is the period of time in a person’s life that sees them transform from childhood to adulthood. It is a time when the individual will experience a unique form of physical growth known as puberty. More recently, the term youth has become a more contemporary reflection of not just physical changes but also the social, emotional and intellectual changes that a person will experience at this stage of their life. The time of life that encompasses youth revolves around attaining the maturity of adulthood in both body and mind.

In Australia, youth is mostly defined as the time in the lifespan from 12 to 18 years of age. However, the age group youth Twelve to 18 years of age; however, it should be acknowledged that classifications for the stage of youth can differ between agencies.
referred to as *youth* varies depending on the organisation and the country using the term. For example, the World Health Organization uses the time span of 10–24 years, while the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) uses the range of 12–24 years of age or 15–24 years of age, depending on the source of data. While the exact period of youth varies from person to person, throughout the study of Health and Human Development it will be considered to fall between the ages of 12–18 years. This stage of the lifespan is also often referred to as *adolescence*.

Physically, youth begins with the onset of puberty and ends with physical maturity (a maturity which includes a mature reproductive system). Socially, youth begins with preparing for employment through formal education systems and ends with achieving some form of financial independence from parents or family.

Emotionally, youth marks the beginning of detachment from parents and ends with gaining a sense of identity. There is a shift in interest from family relationships to peer relationships, leading to a capacity for deeper intimacy with peers and commitment to a loved one.

Intellectually, youth begins with the emergence of more advanced reasoning abilities and ends with the ability to entertain hypotheses, weigh possibilities and see situations from the perspectives of others.

Youth can also be divided into smaller stages that include early, middle and late youth. Early youth is the stage when the focus of development is on changes associated with physical maturity.

During middle youth, individuals tend to be preoccupied with being ‘normal’ and being accepted by their peers. It is also a time when feelings of physical attraction to others begin and young people usually become curious about sex. It is during this time that relationships with family and other carers may change and there may be a greater desire to spend more time with peers than with family. There can also be an increase in parental–child conflict.

Late youth is the stage when the focus of development is on self-discovery and answering questions such as ‘Who am I?’ There is also greater emphasis on the development of more intimate relationships. Major developmental milestones associated with this division of youth into stages include the following.

**Early youth: age 12 to 14 years**

- Increase vocabulary to 40,000 words (nearly double from ages eight to nine).
- Choose friends based on common interests, rather than parent selection.
- Begin the process of sexual maturation, both physically and emotionally.
- Become more interested in community goals – service to others.
- Physically begin to develop the size and shape of an adult.

**Figure 1.9** In early youth, physical appearance becomes a focus
Middle youth: age 15 to 16 years

- Increase their hypothetical reasoning abilities.
- Conduct increasing future planning.
- Experience further sexual maturation and explore issues of sexual identity.
- Exhibit greater complexity of moral reasoning, including abstract principles such as selflessness and a sense of humanity.
- Tend to rely increasingly on similarity of values and shared interests to form friendships.
- Spend majority of time with friends, less time with parents.
- Refine interests and abilities, gain skills in one or more activities.

Late youth: age 17 to 18 years

- Become occupied with thinking about the future, explore more long-term relationships.
- Exhibit moral standards and may get involved in causes.
- Less self-consciousness about their bodies.
- More independent and self-reliant and less influenced by peer groups.
- Develop adult-thinking capacity.
- Overall, during this time, young people are most interested in exploring personal identity, career interests, dating and learning about the issues they will face when living in the adult world.

Figure 1.10 In middle youth, friendship with peer groups becomes increasingly important

Figure 1.11 In late youth, close friendship and dating become a focus

It is important to note that not all young people experience the transition from childhood to adulthood in the same way or within the same time frame. Also, youth can be difficult to classify because it is not universally defined and the social and cultural changes that indicate the end of youth are highly variable.
**THINK, PAIR, SHARE**

Discuss the experiences you have had so far that signify you are experiencing a transition phase from childhood to adulthood.

**Figure 1.12 Youth is a time of …**

---

**Activity ……1.4 ……**

**Being a youth, becoming an adult**

1. Write a definition of youth.
2. Consider what youth means to you. Develop a mind map of your understanding of the youth experience. Refer to Figure 1.12 as a guide.
3. Detail examples of developmental milestones relevant to early youth, middle youth and late youth.
4. Identify the milestones or experiences that you expect to go through at the end of youth that will mark your arrival into adulthood.

---

**1.6 Physical development during youth**

**maturation** Describes the process whereby a person gradually realises their genetic potential.

Physical development is a major component of the individual’s experience during youth. The changes are rapid and often drastic, resulting in rapid growth and physical maturity. The physical maturation of the body results in an individual developing the characteristics that define them sexually. This maturation also allows them to be able to produce children. Changes in physical appearance are the most striking aspects of physical development.

Both the male and female bodies will take on a different shape. The rate and timing of these changes will not be the same for everyone. Other physical changes within the body also take place, including the increase in the size of muscles, bones, organs and the reproductive system.

**Puberty**

**Puberty** is the time of development when youth become physically mature and capable of reproduction. When the body is nearing the onset of sexual maturity it releases chemicals called hormones. **Hormones** are chemical substances released into the bloodstream. They coordinate, regulate and balance the working of organs and cells. The release of these hormones into the body

**puberty** The time signifying the end of childhood and during which significant changes to the way an individual’s body structure and functions occur in terms of skeletal and sexual maturation.

**hormone** A chemical substance produced by the body that acts to regulate and control a wide range of body processes, including physical growth and development.
endocrine system  
A body system made up of glands that release hormones in order to control body functions.

**gland**  
An organ in the body that produces and releases hormones.

The development of secondary sex characteristics is controlled by the *endocrine system*, which is made up of a number of **glands**.

One of the integral glands responsible for the changes that occur during puberty is the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain. Once the reproductive organs (the testes and ovaries, also referred to as *gonads*) mature, it is possible for the individual to produce hormones responsible for further sexual maturity and the ability to reproduce.

---

**Table 1.7** Parts of the endocrine system, their function and the hormones they produce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gland</th>
<th>Function of gland</th>
<th>Hormones produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Hypothalamus** | Produces hormones that travel in blood vessels to the pituitary gland, stimulating it to produce other hormones. It also links the endocrine system to the nervous system. | Hormone-releasing factor GH – growth hormone (targets all cells)  
TSH – thyroid-stimulating hormone (acts on the thyroid)  
ACTH – (acts on the adrenal glands)  
FSH – follicle-stimulating hormone (targets the ovaries and the testes)  
LH – luteinising hormone (targets the ovaries and the testes) |
| **Pituitary gland** | Activates other glands and produces a number of hormones, including growth hormone. | Growth hormone |
| **Thyroid gland** | Produces thyroxine, which provides overall control of the rate of chemical processes in the body – called the metabolic rate. | Thyroxine |
| **Adrenal glands** | Produce adrenaline, which speeds up the heart rate and gets the body ready for emergency action. Adrenal glands are so called because they are next to the kidneys. They also produce the androgen aldosterone that stimulates the male characteristics. | Adrenaline, Aldosterone, Cortisol |
| **Ovaries (females)** | Produce female sex hormones (including progesterone and oestrogen), which control body changes at puberty and during the menstrual cycle. | Oestrogen, Progesterone |
| **Testes (males)** | Produce male sex hormones (including testosterone), which control body changes at puberty and also sperm production. | Testosterone |
Figure 1.14 Hormones produced by the glands and their targets

Activity 1.5

Hormones and puberty

1. What is puberty?
2. What are gonads? Name the gonads that are found in females and the gonads that are found in males.
3. Where is the pituitary gland situated in the body?
4. The pituitary gland is often referred to as the ‘master gland’. Why do you think that is the case?
5. Identify all of the hormones that are produced by the pituitary gland.
6. Choose two of those hormones and identify the parts of the body they target.
7. Produce a mind map with all of the glands and hormones that are involved in the process of female sexual development.
The three types of physical change that occur during this period of life include:

• the growth spurt
• the development of primary sexual characteristics
• the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics.

Growth spurt

During puberty the pituitary gland releases growth hormone (GH) and the body experiences a major growth spurt. The release of this hormone enables the body to grow larger by increasing the number and size of cells. Rapid growth is experienced by the soft tissue (muscles and organs) which become larger and hard tissue (bones) which lengthen and harden or ossify.

The speed of growth at this time is astounding. In males, for example, growth occurs at approximately 10 cm of height per year. Not all parts of the body grow simultaneously and during this time an individual can seem out of proportion in relation to their overall size. Eventually the body will fill out and be in proportion. When this growth period is over, the body will be at its adult height. There will also be weight gain and the overall body shape changes.

Since females generally begin their growth spurt a couple of years before males, they are on average taller than males from age 11 to 13. From age 14 onwards, most males have gained a height advantage that is never lost. They also develop an increase in strength and muscular development. Body fat increases for both genders at puberty, but the gains are greater for females. By the end of youth, males are stronger due to their increased muscle mass and they have larger organs, including their heart and lungs, in comparison to females.

The timing and progress of the changes related to the growth spurt will be determined primarily by the genetic inheritance of the individual. Individuals may be genetically predisposed to be an early or late developer in relation to the expected age norms for puberty. The timing of puberty may also be affected by factors such as stress, nutritional deficiency, illness, athletic training or diet-related diseases.

Activity 1.6

Differences in growth for males and females

1. What is the main hormone involved in the growth spurt?
2. Why do many young people seem out of proportion during the growth spurt?
3. Describe the average changes in height for both males and females from the age of 10 to 18.
4. Describe the average changes in weight for both males and females from the age of 10 to 18.
5. Why are there differences between males and females in height and weight?
6. Survey the members of your class and determine the average height of males and/or average height of females for the same age group.
   a. How does your class average compare to the average in the graphs in Figures 1.15 and 1.16?
As the individual approaches puberty, the brain and pituitary gland release hormones that regulate the reproductive organs of both males and females. These hormones stimulate the ovaries of females to produce other hormones called oestrogen and progesterone and the testes of males to produce testosterone.

The primary sexual characteristics refer to those changes that allow an individual to procreate. Many of the changes experienced are quite different for males and females, so it is important to examine these changes individually for each sex.

Secondary sexual characteristics are those changes that make males and females look like mature men and women. Often these developments change the contour and shape of the body.

**Males**

**Primary sexual characteristics**

In males, between the ages of approximately 12 and 15, the pituitary gland produces LH (luteinising hormone) and FSH (follicle-stimulating hormone), which together stimulate the production of the sex hormones. The first sign of primary sexual characteristics is enlargement of the testes and a thinning and reddening of the scrotum.

Generally for males, the peak growth period of the reproductive organs occurs about two years after the beginning of puberty.
As the penis grows in length and thickness, the internal sexual organs enlarge. The vas deferens that transport sperm from the testes to the urethra develop, and the prostate gland begins to generate fluids that contribute to the development of seminal fluid. A year or so after the acceleration of the growth of the penis, the first ejaculation of seminal fluid occurs. It might take the form of a spontaneous nocturnal emission (often referred to as a ‘wet dream’).

![Figure 1.17 The male reproductive system](image)

### Table 1.8 Male reproductive system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male reproductive system</th>
<th>Function of a part of system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penis</td>
<td>Male sex organ. Used to transport urine from the bladder and also used to transport semen to the outside of the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testicle</td>
<td>Oval-shaped organ that rests in the scrotum and produces sperm and the male hormone testosterone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epididymis</td>
<td>Part of the testicle that holds maturing sperm until needed for ejaculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vas deferens</td>
<td>Tubes that carry mature sperm to be ejaculated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostate gland</td>
<td>Gland that releases secretions vital for the production of semen for ejaculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminal vesicle</td>
<td>Produces seminal fluid which combines with sperm to form semen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urethra</td>
<td>Tube that runs the length of the penis that carries urine and sperm to the outside of the body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Secondary sexual characteristics

Secondary sexual characteristics

The testes start to produce testosterone, which begins the development of secondary sexual characteristics. Height changes are nearly completed by around age 16. Muscle continues to develop at a more dramatic rate and in a very different pattern to the laying down of fat during youth. Males develop larger skeletal muscles and greater heart and lung capacity. They also have increased numbers of red blood cells in comparison to females. This allows them to carry more oxygen from the lungs to the muscles, which helps them gain more muscle.
strength. Overall, males experience a dramatic increase in size, strength, speed and endurance due to the action of testosterone.

Other male secondary sexual characteristics include the appearance of pubic hair, as well as hair under the arms and on the face. The hair on legs and arms will become coarser and for some males chest hair may appear. Another distinctive secondary sexual characteristic for males is the deepening of the voice. During puberty the larynx lengthens and becomes larger. This causes the voice to ‘break’ on its way to becoming deeper.

Secondary sexual characteristics in males can be summarised as:
- the voice breaking and then deepening
- hair growing on the face and body hair increasing
- the body becoming more muscular
- the appearance of pubic and underarm hair.

**Females**

**Primary sexual characteristics**

In females, between the ages of approximately 10 and 14, the pituitary gland produces (LH) luteinising hormone and (FSH) follicle-stimulating hormone, which together stimulate the production of the sex hormones by the ovaries.

The two most important hormones made by the ovaries are oestrogen and progesterone. These are known as the female sex hormones. The ovaries also produce some of the male hormone, testosterone. During puberty, oestrogen stimulates breast development and causes the vagina, uterus and fallopian tubes to mature. It also plays a role in the growth spurt and alters the distribution of fat on a girl’s body, typically resulting in more being deposited around the hips, buttocks and thighs. A small amount of testosterone helps to promote muscle and bone growth.
Table 1.9 Female reproductive system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female reproductive system</th>
<th>Function of a part of system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ovary</td>
<td>Small organ that stores ova (eggs) until they have matured. The ovary will release a mature ovum at the time of ovulation. The ovary also produces the sex hormones oestrogen and progesterone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterus</td>
<td>Part of the female reproductive system, also known as the womb, it provides a suitable environment for the implantation of a fertilised egg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallopian tube</td>
<td>Also referred to as an oviduct, connects to the uterus. It draws in the ovum at the time of ovulation and carries it to the uterus. It is the site where fertilisation takes place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervix</td>
<td>The opening at the end of the vagina that leads into the uterus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagina</td>
<td>Also referred to as the birth canal it is a muscular passage that connects the uterus to the outside of the body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**menarche** A female’s first menstruation or period.

The first time a female’s body is mature enough to experience a menstrual cycle is referred to as the **menarche**. The menarche is a direct result of the development of the ovaries to a point where they are able to produce the sex hormones oestrogen and progesterone.

In order for the menarche to occur LH, FSH, oestrogen and progesterone need to be produced and released in a certain pattern. This results in the maturation of an egg (ovum), which is then released from the ovary to begin its journey down the fallopian tube and into the uterus. If the ovum isn’t fertilised, the levels of oestrogen and progesterone produced by the ovary begin to fall. Without the supporting action of these hormones, the lining of the uterus is shed, resulting in the first ‘period’.

**The menstrual cycle**

The menstrual cycle involves a delicate interplay of hormones. The cycle begins on the first day of bleeding. At this time the pituitary gland releases FSH, which targets the ovaries. The follicles situated in the ovaries are stimulated by the FSH to start the maturation of an ovum in preparation for **ovulation** (the release of the ovum into the fallopian tube). At the same time, another hormone called oestrogen is released by the ovaries, causing changes in the cervix. Cervical mucus increases and the uterus lining or **endometrium** thickens and prepares for implantation. All of these changes ensure conditions are conducive within the reproductive system for fertilisation to occur.

When the levels of oestrogen reach a high enough level, this signals to the pituitary gland to release a sudden surge of the hormone LH, causing the release of the ovum from its follicle.

**ovum** Also referred to as an egg, it contains the DNA from the female parent and is released by the ovaries.

**endometrium** Lining of the uterus.

---

**ovulation** The release of the ovum on approximately day 14 of the menstrual cycle.

---

Figure 1.20 Ovulation
This is ovulation. The ovum is collected by the nearest fallopian tube to await fertilisation.

The burst follicle within the ovary that is left behind is now called the corpus luteum. The corpus luteum continues to secrete reduced amounts of oestrogen and it also begins to secrete greater amounts of the hormone progesterone causing the endometrium to thicken even more in preparation for the implantation of the ovum.

Pregnancy occurs when the fertilised ovum implants successfully into the uterus lining. If fertilisation does not occur, the corpus luteum dies, ceasing the production of the hormones and the endometrium breaks down and is released. This is menstruation. The cycle will then repeat.

Generally, the progression of physical development in puberty is the same for everyone. However, individuals can vary with respect to the timing of the onset and rate of the growth events that take place. Each individual’s development takes a specific form because of the effect of two major factors.

The primary influence on the timing and rate of physical development are inherited influences (the inherited information that the individual receives from their parents in their genetic material). Environmental influences (the various experiences the individual has in their interaction with their surrounding environment) will also impact on how development progresses.

**Corpus luteum**

The follicle area of the ovary from which an ovum has been released.

**Figure 1.21** The menstrual cycle

What are the four main hormones that are involved in the regulation of a female’s menstrual cycle? What role does each of these hormones play in regulating the cycle?

**Secondary sexual characteristics**

When the ovaries start to produce oestrogen and progesterone, the female’s body will experience changes in size and shape. Overall, the female body will have a ‘curvier’ appearance than the male body. This is due to the increase

ISBN 9781107651494 © Goodacre, Collins, Slattery

Cambridge University Press

Photocopying is restricted under law and this material must not be transferred to another party.
in the width of hips in proportion to the width of the waist. The increase in the width of the hips is due to the production of oestrogen, which, along with growth hormone, increases the size of the pelvic bones.

The female’s body will also begin to develop fat in the stomach area, buttocks and legs. This fat deposition occurs to ensure that there is an adequate source of energy to support the growth of a foetus, if pregnancy occurs. Another secondary sexual characteristic of females is the ongoing occurrence of the menstrual cycle.

Some of the other changes that occur for females are the same as for males. These include the development of pubic hair and underarm hair, as well as the thickening of hair on the legs.

Secondary sexual characteristics in females can be summarised as:
- breast development
- widening of hips and thighs
- the appearance of pubic and underarm hair.

Table 1.10 Summary of physical changes for both males and females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate age</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>• pre-pubertal</td>
<td>• pre-pubertal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• no sexual development</td>
<td>• no sexual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 years</td>
<td>• testes enlarge</td>
<td>• breast budding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• first pubic hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• height spurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–14 years</td>
<td>• penis enlarges</td>
<td>• breasts enlarge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• pubic hair starts to grow</td>
<td>• pubic hair darkens and becomes curlier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ejaculation (wet dreams)</td>
<td>• growth of underarm hair begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• onset of menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• hips begin to widen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–16 years</td>
<td>• continued enlargement of testes and penis</td>
<td>• nipple is distinct from areola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• penis and scrotal sac deepen in colour</td>
<td>• pelvis bones responsible for hip widening reach full growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• pubic hair becomes curlier and coarser</td>
<td>• continuation of menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• height spurt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17–18 years</td>
<td>• fully mature adult male</td>
<td>• fully mature adult female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• pubic hair extends to inner thighs</td>
<td>• pubic hair extends to inner thighs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• increases in height slow, then stop in</td>
<td>• increases in height stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>early adulthood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.22 Development of female secondary sexual characteristics
1.7 Social development during youth

Throughout youth, an individual experiences changing social friendships, the initiation of romantic relationships, and an expanding social world that includes greater and more unsupervised interactions with the community. The timing of these changes depends on the different social and cultural expectations of the environment in which the young person lives. While the social development of adolescents takes place in the context of all of their relationships, it is those with their peers and families that undergo the most change.

During youth, the peer group becomes increasingly important as role models. Peers are generally people who have certain aspects of their status in common. For young people, peer groups can include a large network of people such as classmates and community members, or co-workers who are of a similar age group. Not all peers will become friends. Friends are those peers with whom a young person has developed a valued, mutual relationship.

In order to establish greater independence from their parents, youth must orient themselves towards their peers to a greater extent than they did in earlier stages of development. Peer groups serve a number of important functions throughout youth, providing a temporary reference point for a developing sense of identity. Through identification with peers, young people begin to develop moral judgement and values and to define how they differ from their parents. At the same time, however, it is important to note that young people also strive for ways to identify with their parents.

Another important function of peer groups is to provide youth with a source of information about the world outside of the family and about themselves.

Being accepted by peers has important implications for adjustment both during youth and into adulthood. Positive peer relations during youth have been linked to positive...
Introducing youth

Chapter 1

Social adjustment. For example, those who are accepted by their peers and have mutual friendships have been found to have a better self-image and to perform better in school. The nature of a young person’s involvement with peer groups changes over the course of adolescence. During early youth, young people typically have at least one primary peer group with whom they identify whose members are usually similar in many respects, including gender.

During this time, involvement with the peer group tends to be most intense, and conformity and concerns about acceptance are at their peak. The intense desire to belong to a particular group can influence young people to go along with activities in which they would otherwise not engage. The need to belong to groups at this age is too strong to simply ignore. During middle youth, peer groups tend to be more gender mixed. Less conformity and more tolerance of individual differences in appearance, beliefs and feelings are typical.

By late youth, larger peer groups have often been replaced by more intimate dynamic relationships, such as one-on-one friendships and romances. Youth vary in the number of friends that they have and in how they spend time with their friends. To have a friend assumes that one has the social skills to make and keep that friend. For most youth, the fundamentals of those skills are in place, and peer groups and friendships allow them to further develop those skills. For a small number of young people, however, this is not the case. These individuals may be rejected by their peers and this rejection can have serious negative effects, such as drug abuse, dropping out of school or depression, to name a few.

Figure 1.23 During youth our peers help tell us who we are

Positive relationships during youth are needed to enable social development

Figure 1.24
It is important to note that this decreased frequency of contact with family does not mean that family closeness has assumed less importance for the young person. Social interactions between parents and young people, however, may be characterised by greater conflict.

Another factor impacting on the social development of youth is their use of interactive technologies, such as email, instant messaging and mobile text messaging. By offering fast-paced, inexpensive, online communication, these technologies allow for new ‘cyber’ youth social networks to form and evolve. These online networks, in turn, may affect their other social and friendship networks.

Activity

1.8 The importance of peer groups

1. Why are peers important during youth?
2. What social development skills are being developed through time spent with peers?
3. What can an individual learn through their peers?
4. Why is acceptance by peers important for youth?
5. Describe how a person’s relationships with peer groups changes during early, middle and late youth.
6. What are the possible consequences for an individual of not being accepted by a peer group? Why do you think this is?

1.8 Intellectual development during youth

The changes in how youth think, reason and understand can be more dramatic than their obvious physical changes. Intellectual development at this stage of the lifespan includes the ability to reason effectively, problem solve, think abstractly and reflect, and plan for the future. In particular, youth develop the ability to understand metaphors and abstract mathematical concepts and to reason about ideals like justice, religion or love.

The ability to think reflectively can result in the display of new behaviours. For example, young people may question accepted rules and may argue whether rules are reasonable and fair. They may question other people’s beliefs and values because they are now aware that not everyone thinks the same way they do about social or moral issues. Young people start to see the future, so they may relate their interests and present circumstances to the roles they will play as adults, resulting in them evaluating alternatives and setting personal goals.

Although there are obvious individual differences in intellectual development among youth, these new capacities allow young people to engage in the kind of introspection and mature decision-making that was previously beyond their ability.

Despite their rapidly developing capacity for higher-level thinking, most youth still need guidance from adults. Guidance is usually required to learn how to make important decisions on their own, such as
attending a tertiary institution, finding a job or handling finances. While the development of intellectual skills enables greater decision-making capabilities, it doesn’t necessarily mean that there is maturity in judgement – this also requires the development of social and emotional skills. These may not occur at the same time.

The full range of intellectual skills may not necessarily develop simultaneously. Youth who are very skilled or talented in some areas may be weak in others. For example, a young person who has trouble with learning mathematical concepts may excel at game strategy on the basketball court or with learning a foreign language. Therefore, young people need to be given the opportunity to learn in ways that emphasise different types of abilities and increase their chances of success.

**Moral development** refers to the development of a sense of values and ethical behaviour. Developing morals occurs as a result of the combination of intellectual development, in the area of developing reasoning abilities, and social development, and in identifying and displaying socially acceptable behaviour.

A young person’s intellectual development, in part, builds the foundation for moral reasoning, honesty and socially acceptable behaviours. Youth gain moral development by observing altruistic and caring behaviour towards others and by engaging with other people’s perspectives in their communication experiences.

In terms of intellectual abilities gained during this time, topics of morality can allow a young person to express themselves, ask questions, clarify their values and evaluate their reasoning.

### 1.9 Emotional development during youth

With the help of intellectual development, the young person expands their ability to think in new ways about themselves. In turn, aspects of self-esteem and self-concept are developed. This can occur through life experiences such as learning to do new tasks, romantic/intimate relationships, academic success and employment success.

Generally, levels of self-esteem can be quite fluid during youth, especially early youth. As a person progresses through this time their self-esteem will increase as they gain confidence and self-awareness, and begin to form a self-identity.

The development of a sense of self allows the young person to become more able to establish friendships that are based on loyalty and intimacy. These friendships differ from younger friendships, which are based more on mutual trust and assistance.

Emotional development challenges that occur during youth include:

- **Managing changing relationships:** The emotional and social changes young people experience can challenge them as they try to cope with changing circumstances and situations. Friends provide emotional support, but this is a time when friendship patterns are changing and are closely linked to an individual developing their own sense of identity. Youth develop coping skills and learn to deal with relationship issues through communication and
problem-solving skills. Dating typically begins between the ages of 14 and 16 years. As the amount of time invested in a particular relationship increases, the individual will develop skills in expressing emotion.

- **Meeting basic needs**: Young people have a strong need for community. Other central needs include having a sense of meaning in life, physical and emotional security, and basic structure in relationships and living. Changing relationships require greater emotional maturity. The establishment of a sense of self-worth and self-reliance goes hand in hand with the establishment of self-esteem and self-concept.

- **Managing grief and loss**: Young people are influenced by various personal losses. When these losses are experienced, they often involve death in the family (usually grandparents) and the experience of parental separation and divorce. The grief and sense of loss associated with the ending of romantic relationships during youth will also have an impact on emotional development. Young people need to develop coping skills in order to manage the feelings they may experience.

- **Coping with stress**: Youth is a period of considerable stress. While much of the stress can be minimised through support, persistence, and active decision-making and planning, there is a need to establish emotional skills and abilities associated with coping in stressful situations. The ability to cope will also require the development of self-esteem and self-concept.

The development of a self-concept and self-esteem is a major component of a young person’s emotional development. The undertaking of developmental tasks appropriate for this stage of the lifespan will allow the individual to develop a personal sense of self-concept and self-esteem. The progression through these tasks, however, will be influenced by other factors: work and education commitments, exploration of relationships, and obligations to achieve goals. The achievement of these developmental tasks will also vary.

**Figure 1.25 Youth can be a time of great stress**

New skills learnt during youth enable the young person to develop a sense of identity. What skills and experiences have contributed to your sense of identity so far?

As a component of developing a self-concept, or sense of who they are, a young person will attempt to associate with a peer group that reflects or reinforces their self-
identity. The group allows them to feel that they stand out from the crowd. This phase of development allows the youth to search for their sense of self. For example, because rapid physical development is a major element of early youth, developmental tasks are likely to focus on their evaluation of their physical acceptability, as well as acceptance by their peer group.

Youth is a period of great change and growth, as well as changing expectations of others. When young people begin to show signs of physical growth, adults tend to expect more mature emotional behaviour. Growth in physical development, intellectual abilities, social skills and emotional maturity does not necessarily occur at the same rate. Adjusting to dramatic body changes and altered (and sometimes conflicting) expectations from others can impact on a young person’s sense of belonging and sense of identity.

Activity 1.9

Dealing with emotions

Search for the lyrics of a song that depicts a particular emotional issue that is relevant to youth and, in particular, the emotional challenges previously indicated.

1. Describe the challenge.
2. How is the issue dealt with within the song? Is this realistic?
3. Describe how facing the challenge may affect self-esteem and self-concept.
4. Identify the skills that are developed during youth that enable a young person to deal with the emotional challenge.
CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Growth is quantitative in nature and refers to the increase in cell number, size and complexity within the body.
- Development is a term used to describe the gradual changes in our physical, social, emotional and intellectual states and abilities as we move through life. Development involves a gradual and progressive change in ability or capability.
- Physical development refers to those changes that occur in a person’s body over time.
- Physical development also involves changes in physical abilities called motor development – gross and fine motor skills.
- Social development is concerned with the ways in which an individual’s ability to interact with those around them changes as they move through the lifespan.
- An integral component of the social development of an individual is the socialisation process.
- Emotional development deals with feelings and the ways in which an individual expresses, understands and exercises control over them.
- Intellectual development encompasses the ways in which a person is able to think and reason as they move through the lifespan.
- An interrelationship exists between physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Development in one area can often be dependent on the development that occurs in another.
- The human lifespan is the length of time that an individual lives – beginning at conception and ending with death.
- The stages of the lifespan include prenatal, infancy and toddlerhood, childhood, youth and adulthood.
- In Australia, youth is mostly defined as the time in the lifespan from about 12 years old to 18 years old.
- Puberty is the time of development when youth become physically mature and capable of reproduction.
- Hormones coordinate, regulate and balance the working of organs that create the physical changes associated with puberty.
- Once the reproductive organs mature, an individual is able to produce hormones responsible for further sexual maturity and the ability to reproduce.
- The three types of physical change that occur during puberty include the growth spurt, the development of primary sex characteristics and the appearance of secondary sex characteristics.
- Growth hormone enables the body to grow larger by increasing the number and size of cells that cause growth of muscles, organs and bones.
- LH and FSH stimulate the production of the sex hormones between the approximate ages of 12 and 15 for males and 10 and 14 for females.
- The female sex hormones are oestrogen and progesterone and the male sex hormone is testosterone.
- Many young people vary with respect to the timing of the onset and rate of the growth events that take place.
- Throughout youth an individual experiences changing social friendships, the initiation of romantic relationships and an expanding social world that includes greater and more unsupervised interactions with the community.
• During youth the peer group becomes increasingly important as role models.
• The intellectual development at this stage of the lifespan includes things such as the ability to reason effectively, problem solve, think abstractly and reflect, and plan for the future.
• Moral development refers to the development of a sense of values and ethical behaviour. Intellectual development builds the foundations for this reasoning and behaviour.

During youth the young person begins to form the ability to think in new ways about themselves and this allows them to establish additional aspects of self-esteem and self-concept, hence developing emotionally.

An individual’s self-esteem and self-concept can have positive and negative effects on the way they view themselves, hence, their actions, thoughts and feelings are all related to their sense of identity.

KEY QUESTIONS

Summary questions

1 Define individual human development.
2 What is growth?
3 Define and give an example of each of the types of development.
4 Explain what motor skills are and how the development of each of the types of motor skills impacts on the social and emotional development of an individual.
5 Define socialisation. Give examples of socialising agents.
6 To what do self-esteem and self-concept refer? To what type of development are these relevant?
7 Identify the stages of the lifespan. What are the associated ages?
8 Give an example of a developmental milestone or task for each stage of the lifespan.
9 Define the term ‘youth’.
10 Not all young people experience the transition from childhood to adulthood in the same way or over the same time span. Explain why this is the case.

11 Identify the name of the body system responsible for pubertal changes. Explain how it causes and controls these changes.
12 Why are hormones important for physical development during youth?
13 Identify the sex hormones for males and females and explain their function.
14 Provide four examples of primary sexual characteristics and four examples of secondary sexual characteristics.
15 Describe the socialisation that occurs during youth in relation to their peers.
16 During youth an individual expands their ability to reason and problem solve. Discuss what effect the gaining of these new abilities has on an adolescent’s social and emotional development.
17 Identify and describe the emotional development challenges that occur during youth.
18 Why are levels of self-esteem quite changeable during the lifespan stage of youth?
Extension questions

1. Summarise the role of the endocrine system and hormones in physical development during youth by creating a table or diagram (for example, of a human body with labels and explanations). In your summary include all glands (indicating in which part of the body they can be found) and their functions. List all hormones and their functions.

2. Describe the changes in relationships and friendship groups that occur throughout the stage of youth and discuss the importance of self-esteem and self-concept in the process of emotional and social development.

3. Choose a lifespan stage, other than youth, and complete the following:
   a. At approximately what age does the lifespan stage begin and end?
   b. Outline the physical development that occurs during the chosen stage. You can use a diagram to show the changes that occur.
   c. Give an example of the interrelationships between the types of development during this stage. Include all aspects of development in your explanation.

EXAMINATION PREPARATION QUESTIONS

Refer to the photos of Jessica below and answer the questions that follow.

![Figure 1.27 Jessica at 10 years old](image)

![Figure 1.28 Jessica at 13 years old](image)

![Figure 1.29 Jessica at 17 years old](image)

1. Identify three changes in physical development that Jessica has experienced between the ages of 10 and 17 years.
   (3 marks)

2. Provide two examples of how Jessica’s physical development may have had an impact on either her social, emotional or intellectual development.
   (2 marks)

3. Provide two examples of how Jessica’s emotional development may have had an impact on either her social, emotional or physical health.
   (2 marks)

4. Jessica, at 17, has a younger brother aged 14. Describe the changes in physical development he will experience in the next two years.
   (4 marks)

Total 11 marks